

22 June

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

Associate General Counsel

SUBJECT : Geyelin Matter

The stage for the discussion of this matter is rather appropriately set by Mr. Califano's concern that the Washington Post may be criticized for being "pro-CIA". In normal times such an assertion would indicate that the matter is somewhat lacking in seriousness; but these, one hopes, are not normal times.

I hope that we can rely on Mr. Califano's understanding that the DCI did not promise to be a party to the proposed exchange of letters. In my view, the exchange would not be useful to Mr. Geyelin, the Agency would set a precedent in an area where we cannot appropriately do so, and finally, the basis for the Post's request for the exchange of letters is, to say the least, questionable.

You have already referred to some of the reasons that exist against the exchange of letters. I fully agree that paragraph 2 of Mr. Geyelin's letter is not acceptable. Furthermore, I consider paragraph 3 to be the most unacceptable basis for acceding to the Post's request. Apart from the fact that it would create a precedent for the DCI to issue "character references" for journalists and others who would request them, such an act by the DCI can be construed (and publicized) as acceptance of the premise on which the credibility of the CIA is impugned by the press and on which the Agency's very legitimacy is questioned.

In other words, I think that Mr. Geyelin should rely on his own credibility and his own integrity in presenting himself as an honest, professional journalist. The whole matter of the alleged taint which the Agency imposes on members of the press through various degrees of association,